

Bertha and Joseph Zierer House
1404 2nd Avenue
Fourth Ward Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5827

HABS
PA.
7-ALTO,
92-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BERTHA AND JOSEPH ZIERER HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5827

HABS
PA.
7-ALTO.
92-

Location: 1404 2nd Avenue

Date of Erection: 1916

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house veneered in bright yellow brick has an overhanging hipped roof with hipped dormers on the front and sides. The house has a three-bay facade with a picture window in the first floor, and a porch of the same yellow brick with gable-front roof on a stone foundation. Minor alterations include the infill of glass brick to make front basement windows, and the addition of aluminum siding to the dormers.

Although rare, there are several yellow brick houses in the survey sample, and several also with square hipped roofs and multiple dormers--all contemporary with the Zierer House. Built in 1916, it is also in the style of many of the brick porches added to earlier homes and found throughout the neighborhood.

History: The Zierer House has changed hands only once since being built on the site of an earlier frame house also owned and occupied by the Zierer family. Tax records suggest a building date of 1916 for the current house.

Vincent Zierer purchased a half-lot on 2nd Avenue from John and Emma Wright on June 15, 1880. By 1896 he had built a house here and worked as a laborer; in 1900, however, he worked as secretary of the Germania Building and Loan Association No. 3. Vincent died before 1902 when his son, Joseph, purchased the property to help pay off debts of the estate. In 1916 his tax assessment rose from \$900 to \$1,800, reflecting the construction of this house at the front of the lot.

Joseph and Bertha Zierer lived at this address in 1930. Joseph worked as a molder; Ralph O. Zierer, a pipefitter, and Robert Zierer, a cleaner, also shared the residence. In 1939 Louis, a foreman, and Edna M. Neugebauer lived here, while none of the Zierers are listed. Joseph Zierer died in December 1951 and Bertha kept the property--now with only the brick house on it--living here until 1961, when it was sold to its present owner.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1932. Deed books: 43/158, 132/653, 428/495-497, 790/490. City directories. Tax assessment records.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. Overviews of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and the fourth ward neighborhood (HABS No. PA-5786) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Susan Garfinkel in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Garfinkel's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.